

# CITY OF FRESNO

*Office of Mayor Jerry P. Dyer*



**WHEREAS**, preterm birth – defined as delivery before 37 weeks of pregnancy – is the leading cause of infant mortality in the U.S. Fresno County’s preterm birth rate is 9.9%, which is one of the highest in California and is well above the state average of 8.99%; and

**WHEREAS**, decreasing premature birth requires addressing racial and ethnic disparities and access across federal, state, and local governments. For instance, in 2023 preterm birth among Fresno County’s Black women was 14.4% – well above the 9.3% rate for white women and also above the 9.9% rate for all races; and

**WHEREAS**, babies who are born prematurely may have an increased chance of experiencing breathing problems, feeding difficulties, cerebral palsy, developmental delay, and vision and hearing problems; and

**WHEREAS**, doulas are trained non-medical professionals who provide pregnancy support and have been shown to reduce adverse maternal and infant health outcomes among underserved communities. Culturally congruent doula support throughout pregnancy and after labor can increase breastfeeding initiation and duration. They can also reduce preterm birth rates, low-birthweight births, and other preventable infant and maternal mortality risks for women of color; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 80% of maternal deaths are preventable. The causes of preterm births are complex and overlapping, requiring policy changes to improve individual and community health. No woman or child should die of a preventable cause. Improving maternal health and eliminating racial disparities in health outcomes requires a commitment to systematic change.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, Mayor Jerry Dyer and Members of the Fresno City Council, do hereby proclaim November 2024 to be:

## “Prematurity Awareness Month”

In the City of Fresno.

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and affixed the seal of the City of Fresno, California, this 7th day of November 2024.*

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JERRY P. DYER, Honorable Mayor

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ANNALISA PEREA, Council President

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MIKE KARBASSI, Council Vice President

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MIGUEL ARIAS, Councilmember District 3

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TYLER MAXWELL, Councilmember District 4

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LUIS CHAVEZ, Councilmember District 5

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GARRY BREDEFELD, Councilmember District 6

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NELSON ESPARZA, Councilmember District 7